

STATE SENATOR • IRMA CLARK-COLEMAN • 3RD DISTRICT

Clark-Coleman Press Release

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Senate Republicans Block Voter Access

Site Fraud Prevention As Impetus

LANSING – State Senator Irma Clark-Coleman (D-Detroit) lambasted the Senate Republican majority for infringing upon the voting rights of Michigan citizens today as they passed a measure that would require voters to sign a legal document specifying their date of registration in cases of challenged ballots.

“Republicans have made it more difficult to take an active role in the democratic process,” said Sen. Clark-Coleman. “If you’re elderly, an immigrant, Black, Arab American, Hispanic or otherwise a Democrat, it may be more difficult to vote in the presidential elections.”

Under the Republican proposal, any challenged voter will have to sign an affidavit – under the threat of perjury – swearing to the date he/she first registered to vote. This is most harmful to senior citizens and to those constituents whose registration records have been lost in the system. In 2002, Detroit recorded more than 10,000 affidavit ballots.

“What the Republicans did today will only limit voter access. It completely contradicts federal efforts to increase access and improve accuracy,” Sen. Clark-Coleman said.

Sen. Clark-Coleman offered a substitute proposal that would have simply required the voter to sign a written affirmation that states he/she registered to vote more than 30 days prior to an election. This would have removed the threat of a penalty for issuing a false statement and encouraged the individual to vote.

In keeping with the tone of the legislative session, the Senate Republicans also defeated two measures that would have lifted the requirements for absentee ballots and allowed for mail-in ballots. All three measures were defeated on straight party-line votes. Sen. Clark-Coleman and her Democratic colleagues continue to fight for the rights of the people.

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State Sen. Irma Clark-Coleman represents the 3rd Congressional District. She sits on the Banking & Financial Institutions, Education, Families & Human Services, and Senior Citizens & Veterans Affairs committees.